

THE ADVENTURES OF  
**BUG  
& ME**



NONA FREEMAN

# The Adventures of Bug & Me

by Nona Freeman

©1977 Word Aflame Press  
Hazelwood, MO 63042-2299  
Printing History: 1977, 1980, 1983, 1987, 2010

ISBN 0-912315-28-8

Cover Design by Tim Cummings

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Printed in United States of America



**WORD AFLAME PRESS**  
8855 Dunn Road, Hazelwood, MO 63042  
[www.pentecostalpublishing.com](http://www.pentecostalpublishing.com)

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# **Bug and I Get Started**

It all started when the Freeman family teetered up the rope gangplank of the *SS Genevieve Lykes* on that blustery March day in 1948. New Orleans had been lashed by such violent storms the past few days that a ship had run aground in the mouth of the Mississippi. Cars and homes were being lapped by the dirty floodwaters, and it became necessary to deliver groceries by rowboat.

Two additional adults and five extra children had strained the seams of the home of our genial host, Johnny Thomas. There had been six days of forced confinement until the waters had receded and the seven Freemans were able to move to the roomier quarters of the cargo boat bound for Cape Town, South Africa.

Sandra (nine) and Dale (seven) demonstrated their agility by making numerous trips up and down the wobbly gangplank. Lynda (five), Sharon (two), and Marla (six months) acquiesced to being carried on once. There had been an epidemic of coughing flu

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that winter, but the five Freeman children had escaped it—or so we thought. Three days out to sea, Lynda, Sharon, and Maria began to whoop with strangling coughing attacks. How we “whooped it up” across the Atlantic is another story, but somehow we made it in spite of the captain’s strongly expressed displeasure.

We knew that after four to seven years in Africa a furlough would be due, but in those early years such weighty matters as adjustment, language complications, and pioneering with the whole gospel took priority.

By July 1952 we must have had some vague thoughts about furlough but not many. We were in Durban, 400 miles from home, for special services. Some friends, who were away, loaned us their home and cook.

Everyone was asleep that night by the time I had straightened books, picked up sandals and hair ribbons, and gratefully stretched out on my side of the bed. Then the strangest thing happened. I distinctly heard the words: “A preview of future events.”

Pictures (as slides) began to flash in front of me. They were of us! We were frantically trying to complete a red brick building. (I thought it was a church, for we were wrestling with red tape to get ground for one in Durban on that trip.) I saw tent services in progress. I saw myself helping my big Irishman pack. I watched myself tell him good-bye at the airport. Part of my mind was aware of shock when he said he would be gone six months.

## Bug and I Get Started

The disturbingly clear pictures kept flashing. I was working alone, preaching alone, sitting by the bedside of a sick child alone. There were other scenes I did not understand, some intimating danger. Then I saw the head of the house being welcomed home again, and the next few scenes showed us traveling and preaching together.

“Now it is your turn to go; I’ll help you pack.” My anguished cry of “No!” was so real I woke up trembling. “No! No! I don’t want to go alone.”

Too troubled to sleep, I wakened my husband to tell him what I had seen.

“Now, look, Nona, if you think I am going anywhere and leave you and the children for several months because of a dream or a nightmare, you are badly mistaken. I think you ate too much curried cauliflower for supper last night!”

I fervently hoped so and tried to forget the whole affair, but two weeks later, when we returned home, a letter was there from the Missions Department, outlining a plan for separate furloughs. Soon after, some invisible providential wheels started turning toward providing us a home. The anxiety of the dream and letter was shoved into the background.

There is an intimate family fact that should be explained. There was this enterprising baby with confused gears. He crawled backwards! From the habit of looking over his shoulder and backing rapidly to his target, he was nicknamed “Bug.” Because his real names were rather unusual, the pet name stuck. Later, I met and married Bug. What he is has given that humble name amazing qualities—unconscious dignity,